

Jim and Judy are avid dog lovers. They have owned several dogs over the years, most recently a golden retriever and an elkhound. When their elkhound passed away they wanted to find a companion dog for their golden retriever, Buggs.

"I went online to the Humane Society and there she was," says Jim. "So I called. We had adopted another dog for our son in Wisconsin, so they knew who we were already."

Jim says the HHS does a very thorough job of checking out potential homes for adoption.

When they brought Shiloh to the Eisenmenger farm Jim says they got acquainted and she hasn't left their sides.

"She wasn't too keen at first leaving the people she knew so we put her on a leash in the back yard. Within a day she was home," said Jim.

"She can run out here. But her favorite thing is to go down to the lake for walks," said Judy. "And she loves playing in the water."

Shiloh fits right in with the couple's other golden retriever. They play and have so much fun playing.

Gwen says saying goodbye to Shiloh was hard, but she remains in touch with Shiloh's new family.

"She is now a house dog and has a dog to play with too. I know they love her very much. They still send me photos and email updates on her, expressing how much she is loved," she adds.

Shiloh's story isn't much different than the hundreds of other dogs and cats saved each year through the Heartland Humane Society.

And while they can't help every one that comes to them for assistance, they do their best to find foster families and "forever homes" for as many as they can.

Gwen says there are many more dogs and cats that need to be saved, and not enough foster homes.

"All fostering cost us was our love and time. And my husband Mark and I found we had enough of that for foster dogs. And we were paid back by their unconditional love. I think they know what we did for them," said Gwen.

Becoming a foster home is easy and rewarding, says Jannette Kaddatz, Fostering Coordinator for the Heartland Humane Society.

"There is no cost to fosters, unless they choose to buy little things like toys and such. We provide the food, unless they want to buy it," Kaddatz adds. "Vet care is also taken care of."

Right now the Heartland Humane Society is in need of foster homes for dogs.

"The more we have (foster homes) the more we can help," Kaddatz said.

If you have any questions about fostering, volunteering, donating or adopting, you are encouraged to call the Heartland Humane Society at 664-4244.

This holiday season if you are thinking of adopting a pet, Kaddatz says it's best to wait until after the holidays to bring a new pet into the home.

"This is always a busy time of the year, and bringing in a new pet can be stressful on the animal," she said.

Kaddatz recommends buying some of the things the new pet will need and present that as the gift along with a card that says once the holidays are over you can bring home your new family member.

■ Story and photos by Heidi Henson

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